

FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**THE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY
CHORUS**

Doreen Rao, conductor

&

**THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
ENSEMBLE**

Pierre Hétu & Gary Kulesha, conductors



Saturday, March 21, 1992

8:00 pm

MacMillan Theatre

PROGRAMME

Quartino
Contemporary Music Ensemble
Henryk Gorecki
Rachel Klaassen, flute; Jaye Marsh, flute
Heidi Postl, oboe; Karen Graves, violin

With how sad steps
from "Love Songs"
Owen Underhill
Text: Sir Philip Sidney

An Island In The Moon
Contemporary Vocal Ensemble
David Bedford
Shira Gilbert, soprano; Hilary Knox, soprano
Mark McCallen, baritone; David De Jong, baritone

Cosmopolitan Suite
Chan Ka Nin
Stephen Clarke, piano
Jon Saulnier & Craig Hunter, percussion
Gary Kulesha, conductor

The Unanswered Question
Charles Ives
Pierre Hétu, conductor

♦ ♦ INTERMISSION ♦ ♦

Songs of the Lights
Imant Raminsh

Shaman Songs
Gary Kulesha
University Symphony Chorus
Doreen Rao, conductor

Jeremy Bell, first violin
Karen Graves, second violin
Samuel Jeung, viola
Margaret Tobola, cello
Hsiao-Ling Tsai, clarinet

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

Doreen Rao, conductor

Songs of the Lights

Imant Raminsh
(b. 1943)

Firefly Song (Ojibway)

Flitting insects, white-fire insects, wand'ring beasts!
Small-fire beasts!
Wand'ring beasts!

Weave little stars about my bed.
Weave little stars into my sleep.

Come, little dancing white-fire bug.
Come, little flitting white-fire beast.

Light me with your white flame magic,
Light me with your little star torch.

Oksana Rodak, student conductor

White Feathers (Papago Indian)

Downy white feathers are moving, are moving
beneath the sunset.
Downy white feathers are moving, are moving
along the edge of the world.

Janet Breneman, student conductor

My Heart's Friend (Shoshone)

Fair is the white star of twilight,
And the sky clearer at day's end.
But she is fairer, she is dearer,
She, my heart's friend.

Fair is the white star of twilight,
And the moon roving to the sky's end.
But she is fairer, better worth loving,
She, my heart's friend.

George Brough, piano

I Orpingalik Speaks of Singing

How many songs I have I cannot tell you. I cannot keep
count of them anymore than I can keep count of the breath
I take. There are so many times in life when joy or
sorrow are felt in such a way that the need to sing comes
with them. And I must sing. And so I know only that I have
many songs. All my being is song, and I sing as I draw
breath.

II Invocation -

Spirit of the air,
Come down,
Come down!
Your shaman calls!

I rise,
I rise among spirits,
I rise with the phantoms of the dead!

All around me are bones,
bleached by Great Sila,
bleached by the sun and air

But the spirit and the day
flow through my limbs
and do not turn them to bones.

Child, great child,
Child-master of air,
Come down,
Great infant spirit!

III Incantation

My great companion, my great guardian spirit
My great companion, my great guardian spirit.
Our fine incantation, our fine cries.
My companion, the one who cries out within
me ...

IV Uvavnuk is Struck by a Meteor and
Becomes a Shaman

V Uvavnuk's Song / The Great Sea

The great sea
I am adrift on the great sea,
It moves me as the weed in a great river,
Earth and the great weather
Move me,
They have carried me away
And move my inward parts with joy!

VI Ancient Song

Let me go and watch it vanishing.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Songs of the Lights

Imant Raminsh

Imant Raminsh was born in 1943 in Latvia, and came to Canada in 1948. After completing his ARCT diploma in violin at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto (1962) and a Bachelor of Music at the University of Toronto (1966), including studies in composition with Talivaldis Kenins and choral techniques with Charles Peaker and Elmer Iseler, he spent two years in post-graduate work at the Akademie Mozarteum, Salzburg, studying composition, fugue, violin, and conducting.

Raminsh's works have won acclaim through performances by groups like the Elmer Iseler Singers, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus and the Stockholm Chamber Choir, and he has received recent commissions from the Vancouver Chamber Choir, Vancouver Bach Choir, the Da Camera Singers of Edmonton, the British Columbia Choral Federation and the CBC. His principal publishers are Gordon V. Thompson and Boosey and Hawkes (New York).

Raminsh has maintained a lifelong interest in vocal and choral music, and most of his compositions display a strongly melodic emphasis, perhaps reflecting his Latvian song-oriented cultural heritage.

Songs of the Lights is based on the theme of the natural lights of the world and the universe, as seen through the eyes, and as interpreted in the mythology and poetry of the native American peoples. Subjects range from the primordial creation of light, through the first illuminations of the sun, moon, and stars. There are appearances of more modest lights such as the rainbow and fireflies, to the extinguishing of light in the last wisps of sunset. This set of songs is dedicated by the composer to Doreen Rao and the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus.

Firefly Song (translated by H.H. Schoolcraft) attempts to capture the essence of the winking and ever-transforming miniature starscape of the Ojibway text. Points of instrumental and vocal colour (in the form of trills, triadic sonorities, tone clusters, closely overlapping imitative entries) and frequently changing moods are intended to echo the dance of the "flitting, small-fire beasts".

The first section invoking the firefly is characterized by bursts of nervous energy. The second section ("weave little stars about my bed") is more melodic and lyrical. Section three begins with a declamatory statement ("come, little dancing white-fire bug") and is dominated by a cascading minor third figure ("light me with your white flame magic") which subsides, prior to the recapitulation of sections one and two. The piece ends with a coda on the text "weave stars into my sleep", which rises from *ppp* to *mf* and subsides again to conclude at *pp* level.

White Feathers is set to a translation from the Papago by Frances Densmore (1867-1957), the foremost American authority on the songs and music of American Indian tribes. The text likely describes or suggests the wisps of clouds on the western horizon illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun. But one might possibly visualize northern lights (though the aurora is probably a rare occurrence as far south as the Papago homelands).

The textual imagery is one of subtlety, changing shades and colours. I have tried to capture this in delicate descending curtains of sound (scale passages in the piano part) against which the simple melodic material provides contrast and stability. The last section begins with a more vigorous rising line and culminates in the only *forte* of the piece after which the opening returns to end the piece with a feeling of tranquillity.

My Heart's Friend is set to an interpretation of a Shoshone love song by the great American novelist, Mary Austin (1868-1934), best known for her works about the Indian tribes of the southwest. The melody in Voice I is a simple strophic one keeping with the clearly defined two verses of text. It begins with a restrained first section, ("fair is the white star of twilight") which is followed by a rhapsodic rising line ("but she is fairer...") and subsides again on "she, my heart's friend". The melody in Voice II, designated as optional, is largely contained within the accompaniment, but is strongly recommended in performance for the measure of intensification it adds to the more exultant sections of the piece.

Imant Raminsh

Shaman Songs

Gary Kulesha

Gary Kulesha's *Shaman Songs* were commissioned by the CBC for the Festival of the Sound and first performed by the Elora Festival Choir in 1990. The Inuit poems set by Mr. Kulesha celebrate the eloquent sound and spirit of Inuktitut, a language that according to Northrop Frye may soon disappear. While the poems are set in English, the Chorus has made an effort to create the sounds and articulations associated with Inuktitut, a condensed language that may sound monotonous to some ears, but provides a powerful source of expression for a poet, a shaman, or spirit-maker. As explained by Orpingalik, a leader of the Netsilik, the People of the Seal, "songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices."

As recorded by the Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen in 1921, Orpingalik was a skilled hunter, an expert archer and an experienced kayakman. He was held in high esteem as an outstanding poet and powerful shaman. "He was always singing when he had nothing else to do, and he called his songs 'comrades in solitude' or he would say that his songs were his breath". Orpingalik could draw up a song to meet every need. Orpingalik and his fellow shaman Uvavnuuk have given Canada many songs. Our songs tonight celebrate these great poets, their people and their lands farthest north -- Ajajai aja.

Doreen Rao



TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

GARY KULESHA is active as a pianist, conductor and principally as a composer. In 1986 he was named composer of the year by the Performing Rights Organization of Canada; he is the youngest composer ever to be so named. Since 1988 he has been Composer-in-Residence with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra. In 1990, his work *The Third Chamber Concerto* was nominated for a Juno Award as Best Classical Composition released on disc in 1988-89.

Prior to her appointment as Director of Choral Programs at the University of Toronto, **DOREEN RAO** held the dual position of assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and music director and conductor of the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus. During her long association with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under Sir Georg Solti and Margaret Hillis, Doreen Rao prepared choruses for recordings that won four Grammy Awards and a Grand Prix du Disque. Doreen Rao made her conducting debut at London's Royal Festival Hall in 1980 and her New York conducting debut with the American Symphony Orchestra in 1985. Dr. Rao has also been a featured guest conductor for numerous university choral workshops, all state choruses and international music festivals.

Dr. Rao is especially recognized for her commitment to performance based music education and the future of choral music in the schools. She founded the ACDA National Committee on Children's Choirs in 1979 and served on the MENC National Committee on Standards in Music Education until 1985. Doreen Rao holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. She is the author of *Choral Music Experience*, a comprehensive series of choral textbooks and music published by Boosey & Hawkes.

PIERRE HÉTU, born in Montreal, graduated from the Conservatoire de Montréal and the Music Department of the Université de Montréal. He studied conducting in Paris and spent three consecutive summers at the Chigiana Music Academy in Sienna, Italy. In 1961 he won the first prize of the International Competition for Conductors in Besançon, France, after which he spent one year in Vienna at the Music Academy. He also studied with Charles Munch in Tanglewood, and in Düsseldorf with Jean Martinon.

In 1963 he was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Montreal Symphony. In 1968 he became the Music Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and two years later accepted the post of Associate Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. From 1973 to 1980 he was the Music Director of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Since 1980, Mr. Héту has continued his guest conducting with major Canadian orchestras and opera houses, the CBC radio and television, European and American orchestras. More recently, he has been involved in clinics with various student orchestras across North America and has taught conducting both privately and in master classes. Pierre Héту is now Associate Professor and the resident conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

Student Members

Soprano

Hehsun Chun
Alice Hayward
Lisa Iwasaki *
Anita Kwok
Susan Lexa
Andrea Ludwig
Jennifer Maines
Olga Mychajluk
Dini Odinski
Bonnie Rosenberg
Doreen Taylor
Esther Tse
Rebecca Whelan
Anne Wright

Altos

Paula Babb+
Andrea Bellefeuille
Janet Brennehan*
Joan Curry
Judith DeHaney
Hilary Knox
Rhonda Lennie
Batya Levy*
Deborah Maes
Colleen Morrison
Yee Man Tsui
Jennifer Tyrwhitt
Vilma Vitols
Marianne Zin

Tenors

Rob Herriot
Rick Hiir
Stephen Holloway

Basses

Allen Alexander
Kerim Anwar
Joe Argentino
David Baitz
Rob Baker
Tony Bergamin
Victor Ceni
Martin Cheng
Deon Flash
Jonathan Freeman
Drew Gill
Mike Hall
Ho Lee
Rob Matys
Matt Pines
David Pratt
Colin Roche
Warren Seale
Marc Sottile
David Szanto
Marc Toth
Anthony Zarb

Community Members

Sopranos

Talin Arzumian
Rosemary Beattie
Francis Bianchi
Anne Bolger
Lois Bradley-Bell
Cathy Cassel
Joy Chan
Cheryl Haney
Anne Kong

Joan MacNeil
Sophia Panousopoulos
Connie Price
Friederike Runge
Madhu Sethi
Rebecca Simkin
Carol Smiley
Sharon Totafurno
Mimi Wong

Altos

Lise Beaupré
Karen Bender
Cathy Blewett
Elisabeth Block
Brigid Brady
Lori Dolloff
Elizabeth Elliott
Sandra Gazetos
Ariela Getrajhendler
Judy Ginou
Janet Hinton
Rosalyn Irvine
Carol Kerr
Sara Lackie
Elizabeth Legget
Marlene Marwah
Reta McWhinnie
Barbara Muirhead
Chrisiane Palmer
Jennifer Pierson
Liz Radzick
Audrey Stacey
Kathy Treganowan
Leanne Waters

Tenors

Ken Beattie
Joaquin Espinoza
Thomas Kemple
Bert Roest
George Yu

Basses

Ross Aiken
Mark Bell
David Bowser
Alan Elliot
Mike Griffin
Neil Johnston
Neil Langley
James McGowan
Arpád Molnar
Carlos Noronha
David Pratt
Reid Robins
Henry Rose
Gerard Stocker

+ Manager
* Section leader